

Center News

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A Newsletter for Federal Child Care Centers

Summer 2006

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17th Annual Child Care Conference Hits New Highs

An enthusiastic crowd of over 400 participated in the 17th Annual GSA Child Care Conference held in Chicago, Illinois on August 1-3. The Office of Child Care conducts this training conference every year to keep centers up to date in quality standards and recognize individuals' and centers' excellence during the past year. During the conference a congratulatory letter from President George Bush was delivered by David Bibb, Deputy Administrator. Bibb joined Mark Ginsberg, Executive Director, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), at this year's Accreditation Luncheon to recognize 17 GSA child care centers for their success in achieving accreditation and reaccreditation by NAEYC this year.

David L. Winstead, Commissioner, Public Buildings Service presented this year's Cornerstone Awards to 11 individual and team recipients.

The conference program was divided into five tracks, offering 22 breakout sessions for directors, teachers, boards of directors, facility and security managers and agency representatives. Some highlights of these sessions include: understanding the new NAEYC requirements, providing safe, secure and sustainable spaces, creating great places for young children indoor and out, board roles, team building, brain differences in how boys and girls develop, facility tours of three downtown Chicago centers and a panel discussion moderated by Commissioner Winstead on meeting our strategic goals and satisfying our customer needs.

Highlights from the conference include: Grammy winner Ella Jenkins engaging the audience with a rousing rendition of "One potato, Two potato" complete with hand movements, the Jesse White Tumbling Team dazzling the audience at the Cornerstone Awards, and Kathy Buckley, America's first hearing impaired comedienne who gave a powerful, inspirational keynote address showing the audience that anyone can overcome adversities when given respect, encouragement, and support.



Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell Visits SSA Center in Wilkes Barre

On Friday, June 9th, The East Mountain Child Care Center Director, Mary Clarke, received a call from the Pennsylvania State Office of the Governor telling her that Governor Ed Rendell would be visiting her center that afternoon. The Governor was interested in visiting a center that had received the state's Keystone Stars awards and chose the SSA center.

The Governor spent 45 minutes with the pre-kindergarten children, talking about the state's Children's Health Insurance Program. "This was quite an experience for the children and the center", said Carol Pisano, Work/Life Coordinator for SSA at the Data Operations Center in Wilkes Barre. According to Pisano the center had only two hours to prepare for the visit but despite the short notice, the security staff did a great job of coordinating the visit as well as the center staff and children who created a welcome sign for the Governor.



HUD BREAKS GROUND ON NEW CHILD CARE CENTER

Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Deputy Secretary Roy Bernardi and Assistant Secretary Keith Nelson were joined by General Services Administration (GSA) Deputy Administrator David Bibb in breaking ground for HUD's new child care center. The state-of-the-art center will provide a safe and convenient environment for the children of HUD Headquarters employees at 451 7th Street, Washington DC and surrounding federal agencies. Construction will commence July 2006 with anticipated completion in July 2007.

"GSA was excited to work along side with HUD in getting the plans for this new child care center approved through the National Capital Planning Commission," said GSA Deputy Administrator David Bibb. The National Capitol Planning Commission and the Commission of Fine Arts approved the exterior of the structure. In an effort to maintain the architectural aesthetics of the existing building, attention was given to the design to allow for large amounts of natural light through the glass perimeter walls.

In 1978, the child care center first opened in the basement of the Weaver Building with 20 students. The new center will have a capacity of 76 students, from infants to preschoolers, and will be located under the overhang of the southwest portion of the building. The new center will house an inviting entrance lobby, six age-appropriate classrooms, offices, warming kitchen, outdoor infant play yard and other support spaces.

In her **Exchange** article, "[Looking at the Quality of Early Childhood Programs](#)," Lilian Katz, proposed evaluating programs both from top-down and a bottoms-up perspectives. Here is her view on the latter...

"The characteristics of a program that really predict its outcome are the answers to the bottom-up question, which is: What does it feel like to be a child in this environment? Obtaining answers to this question is not easy! It requires making the very best guess one can about how each individual child in this group experiences the program. We can proceed by asking about the environment on behalf of each child:

- Is it welcoming rather than merely captivating?
- Do I belong in the group rather than merely have a good time?
- Am I usually accepted by adults rather than scolded?
- Am I taken seriously rather than just precious or cute?
- Am I usually accepted by some peers rather than isolated, neglected, or rejected?
- Is this environment usually involving rather than entertaining?
- Are the activities meaningful rather than mindless?
- Are the activities engaging rather than amusing?
- Are the activities interesting rather than boring?
- Do I usually come here willingly rather than reluctantly?

It seems to me that only when answers to most of these questions are positive can we assume that the quality of the program is worthy of our children. This article was taken from [Exchange Every Day 7/17/2006](#)

ExchangeEveryDay is a free service of Exchange Magazine. View this article online at [ChildCareExchange.com](#).

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS



Center Initiates Hunger Awareness Curriculum

In support of World Hunger activities the children at the Club Fed Child Care Center in Albany, New York, participated in a week long curriculum aimed at helping those less fortunate than themselves.

Activities for the week included collection of non-perishable food items in a box decorated by the children for donation to the local food pantry. The pantry, located just across the street from the center was very appreciative of the four boxes of food the children collected.

A special thanks to all the Club Fed families and employees of the Leo O'Brien Federal Building who generously participated in this worthy initiative!

Bannister Complex Child Development Center Celebrates Reaccreditation

The GSA Child Development Center at the Bannister Federal Complex in Kansas City, Missouri celebrated its reaccreditation from the National Association for the Education on Young Children (NAEYC) on July 18th. The children sang a variety of songs and presented autographed t-shirts to the guest speakers, the Heartland Regional Administrator, Brad Scott, and the Director of the Office of Child Care, Eileen Stern.

The center, which originally opened in 1989, is operated by KidCor, Inc. and serves 86 children from federal families working for the Internal Revenue Service, the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, and the Treasury, the Marine Corps, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, and GSA. They received their NAEYC reaccreditation earlier this year and have also participated in the Quality Rating System using the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale and the Infant Toddler Environmental Rating Scale. The non-profit board for this center is actively involved in fund raising activities in order to provide tuition assistance for up to 20 federal families each year.



Of the GSA centers eligible for NAEYC Accreditation, 90% are now accredited.

Congratulations to the following centers on their recent accreditation:

- * Courthouse Kids, Islip, New York, managed by Imagine Early Learning Centers
- * Mulberry Child Care and Preschool at CMS, Baltimore, MD



Congratulations to the following centers on their recent reaccreditation:

- * Social Security Center, Woodlawn, MD
- * CCC Learning Center, Chicago, IL
- * White Flint Country Day, Rockville, MD, managed by George Town Hill

IMPROVE YOUR OUTREACH AND MARKETING

GSA will now list your center web site along with your mailing address on the GSA.GOV/Childcare list of centers. Contact your GSA Regional Child Care Coordinator about linking your site. If your center does not have a web page you should consider creating one.

Tundra Tykes Breaks Ground for New Building in Anchorage, Alaska

Region 10's Northern Service Center broke ground June 14 on a new leased child care center located at Eighth and D Streets in downtown Anchorage. The new facility will replace the existing Tundra Tykes facility and will continue to be operated by Easter Seals Alaska. The new center will open in January, 2007.

Participating in the ceremony (pictured left to right) were V. Gutierrez-Osborne, President of Easter Seals Alaska, Kimberly Coon, Northern Service Center Director, Anchorage Mayor Mark Begich, Leonard Hyde of JL Properties, the center developer, Earle Williams from the Tundra Tykes Parent Board of Directors and Dan Brown, GSA Director of Customer Operations. Kimberly Coon acted as Master of Ceremonies. Four children from the child care center helped dig dirt and break ground.

The new child care center is designed to the GSA Child Care Design Guide and new National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) standards. Features include capacity for nine more children, smaller classrooms to accommodate smaller child group sizes and a multi-purpose room for indoor active play in inclement weather. Currently 50% of the participants are from Federal families.



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Contributions and Comments on Center News are welcome and encouraged.